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Sixty-ninth session

Summary record of the 712th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 2 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Delmi ..... (Algeria)

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General debate (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Imamberdiyev** (Turkmenistan) said that, in its efforts to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals, his country was committed to implementing programmes aimed at refugees and stateless persons, including in collaboration with the UNHCR regional office, which to date had enabled more than 22,000 people to obtain Turkmen nationality. The implementation of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014–2024 was progressing well: a law on statelessness had been adopted in 2017 and simplified, flexible naturalization criteria had been introduced into legislation. In addition, revised laws on Turkmen citizenship, refugees, migration and the state of emergency had been adopted.

2. **Ms. Chohan** (South Africa) said that her country was currently hosting more than 126,000 refugees and that, in 2017, a further 2,267 persons had been granted refugee status. Nearly 7,000 refugees had been granted permanent residence status. Between 2007 and 2015, the country had opened its doors to over 1 million asylum seekers, among the highest numbers in the world. Unlike many countries, South Africa did not place asylum seekers and refugees in detention centres but allowed them to retain their freedom of movement. They also enjoyed a range of rights, including the right to education, health care and employment. However, it was worrying to note that many asylum seekers worked in the informal sector. The country was committed to enhancing efficiencies in processing applications for asylum and was taking steps to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated to that task. The World Bank's decision to allocate additional funds to refugee care was to be welcomed, and it was hoped that that process would be conducted with the greatest transparency and that displaced persons would benefit from that assistance.

3. **Mr. Dávalos** (Ecuador) said that his country, which was hosting the largest number of refugees in the region, welcomed all persons who wished to seek refuge there without any discrimination. Such persons enjoyed the same rights as Ecuadorian citizens, including those of access to education, health, employment and social security. In addition, every child born in the territory automatically acquired Ecuadorian nationality. Since 1990, Ecuador had received approximately 250,000 asylum applications. As at August 2018, it had granted refugee status to 65,000 persons, 98 per cent of whom had been Colombian nationals. Ecuador was currently facing a massive influx of migrants and refugees from Venezuela. Since 2014, 1 million such persons had sought refuge in the territory, including 680,000 in 2018 alone. To date, Venezuelan nationals had filed around 7,000 asylum claims, 1,250 of which had been found admissible. The country had adopted an electronic visa system in order to regularize the status of an additional 40,000 people, 85 per cent of whom were Venezuelan nationals. In order to better manage the Venezuelan crisis at the regional level, the country had convened a meeting on the mobility of Venezuelan citizens on 3 and 4 September 2018. The meeting had been attended by 11 countries in the region and a number of international organizations and had resulted in the adoption of the Declaration of Quito on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens. Despite the many efforts that it was making, Ecuador did not have sufficient funds to provide refugees with all the help they needed. It would be desirable for the international community to provide more sustained assistance to the country and ensure more equitable sharing of responsibilities.

4. **Mr. Rugsanaoh** (Thailand) said that, over the previous year, a series of measures had been taken to address issues related to migration, population displacement and statelessness. A screening mechanism would soon be put in place, and a policy on alternatives to detention for migrant children was about to be adopted. In addition, a law had recently been drafted that was aimed at distinguishing between persons in genuine need of protection and those who migrated to the country illegally for economic reasons. The Governments of Thailand and Myanmar were working together, with the support of the International Organization for Migration and UNHCR, to facilitate the systematic and voluntary return, in sustainable, dignified and safe conditions, of the 110,000 persons originating from Myanmar who were displaced in Thailand. To date, 163 displaced persons had been able to return to Myanmar and 300 more were expected to do likewise in the coming months. Thailand had participated in the #IBelong campaign of UNHCR and was

working to end statelessness, including by granting Thai nationality to certain groups, as shown by the recent naturalization of 30 stateless persons. The country was also considering acceding to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

5. **Mr. Alemi Balkhi** (Afghanistan) said that, despite the conflicts and natural disasters affecting the country, considerable efforts had been made over the previous four years to enable the voluntary and safe return of Afghan refugees and to reintegrate them into society. That issue, along with the fight against migrant smuggling, lay at the heart of the Government's concerns, as reflected by the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework and by Presidential Decree No. 305 of 29 August 2018, which addressed a wide range of issues directly related to refugees. Although more than 9 million refugees had returned in the previous 17 years, it would not be possible to resolve the problem of Afghan refugees, who had endured their situation for a very long time, without the help of the international community. That community should strengthen its partnerships and ensure better burden sharing in order to provide those refugees with the assistance that they needed.

6. **Ms. Hinda** (Namibia) said that her country was taking steps to ensure the voluntary repatriation of all former Namibian refugees in Botswana and wished to work closely with UNHCR and countries of origin to find durable solutions to the problems faced by refugees and asylum seekers in the country. Namibia also expected to finalize the process of integrating 664 Angolan refugees by the end of 2018. It was concerning to note that refugees and stateless displaced persons were more at risk of trafficking, particularly for the purposes of organ harvesting. It was important to put an end to that practice, which had persisted for decades. In that regard, Namibia remained committed to the full implementation of the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014–2024. In August 2018, Namibia and UNHCR had also conducted a verification exercise, through the Population Registration and Identity Management Ecosystem, which had enabled reliable statistical data to be gathered for planning purposes.

7. **Ms. Edlund** (Canada), noting that her country provided multi-year unearmarked funding to UNHCR, said that Canada would extend its resettlement programme to include an additional 1,000 vulnerable women and girls. The recent establishment of a partnership with the World Bank to allocate additional IDA18 funds to Bangladesh, the whole-of-government response to the Rohingya crisis and the $1 billion allocated to crisis management in the Syrian Arab Republic demonstrated the strong commitment of Canada to supporting refugees and host countries. In addition, Canada was promoting the access of refugees to education and had planned to allocate $400 million to that end. That sum was included in the recent $3.8 billion investment by Canada to support access to education for women and girl victims of conflict.

8. **Mr. Beregoi** (Republic of Moldova) said that his country was already successfully implementing the goals of the comprehensive refugee response framework. It therefore ensured that refugees had access to education, including higher education, and to health care, social welfare and the labour market under the same conditions as its nationals. The Moldovan Government was convinced that access to education, in safe and non-discriminatory conditions, enabled refugees to integrate into society and, in the long term, would contribute to the recovery and reconstruction of countries currently involved in conflicts. Recognizing the contribution that refugees could make to sustainable economic development, the Republic of Moldova was working to facilitate their economic and social integration and their access to the labour market. In order to consolidate its national integration system, it had drafted a bill amending national legislation on the integration of foreign nationals. The Republic of Moldova supported the 10-year campaign to end statelessness carried out by UNHCR and had acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

9. **Mr. António** (Observer for Angola) said that Angola aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. In response to the greatest humanitarian emergency that the world had ever known and the need to rapidly define the conditions and procedures for granting and withdrawing refugee status, the Government of Angola had adopted Act No. 10/15 of 17 June 2018 on the right of asylum and refugee status as well as laws related to the National Council for Refugees and the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Centre. Angola was providing protection and assistance to 52,833 refugees

and 30,000 asylum seekers. Since 2017, it had received 35,644 refugees from Kasaï province who needed international assistance. Of those refugees, 22,428 were living in Lunda Norte province, including 13,741 in a camp in Lovua, and 8,714 were living in Dundo. Despite its financial difficulties, the Government was continuing to support the Lovua refugee camp, was enabling refugees to engage in agricultural activities by giving them access to land, was providing food aid, non-food aid, education, water and birth registration, and was ensuring that women and girls were protected from violence. In view of the fact that the reduction in the budget of UNHCR particularly affected the African continent, Angola called on the international community to mobilize the resources needed for efforts and responsibilities in the area of refugee assistance to be shared.

10. **Mr. Aala** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that he regretted the fact that some actors placed political conditions on aid to refugees, which was contrary to the principles of humanitarian action, and that others refused to share the burden and responsibilities linked with receiving refugees. The best way to resist such pressure was to respect the principles governing the activities of the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system, avoiding any politicization. While the necessary resources must be mobilized to address the challenges associated with forced displacement, the priority must be to address its root causes. Several countries that were undergoing humanitarian crises were subject to attempts to destabilize them but international organizations made no mention of that fact in their reports. The humanitarian crises in the region were mainly caused by foreign occupation, terrorism and unilateral coercive measures. The Israeli occupation remained the main reason for the forced displacement of millions of Palestinian refugees, including the 500,000 Palestinian refugees who had resided in the Syrian Arab Republic for 70 years and the 500,000 Syrians who had been forced to leave the occupied Syrian Golan since 1967. It was regrettable that no account was taken of the impact on the rights of Syrians of unilateral coercive measures against the Syrian Arab Republic. Unilateral coercive measures targeting all the essential sectors of the country must be abolished so that refugees could return home. In that regard, he drew the attention of the High Commissioner for Refugees to the report drawn up by the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights following the latter's visit to the Syrian Arab Republic in connection with the thirty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council. The victories of the Syrian armed forces and efforts to promote local reconciliation had made it possible for several regions to be freed from terrorism and stabilized, allowing the local people to return home. The Government had invited Syrians forced to flee the country by the terrorist attacks and conflicts to return home and had set up a governmental coordination commission to facilitate their return. With the valuable support of the Russian Federation, the Government would spare no effort to create conditions conducive to the return of its nationals. The Syrian Arab Republic expected international organizations to cooperate and actively contribute to that return by focusing more on development-oriented programmes and on the need to rebuild national infrastructure. The Government welcomed the launch of a dialogue with United Nations agencies, which had expressed their willingness to cooperate with it and assist it in facilitating the return of refugees. Together with UNHCR, it was currently examining ways of balancing cooperation requirements with respect for Syrian law and sovereignty in supervising the return of refugees. The Syrian Arab Republic insisted on the need to provide UNHCR with the necessary financial resources for its activities, avoiding any politicization. In that regard, it was unfortunate that some States were falsely claiming that the safe conditions necessary for the voluntary return of Syrian refugees were not in place. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic called on those States to find a cure for their schizophrenia and renounce their designs on its territory. It also hoped that UNHCR would carry out its actions with due regard for the stability of the liberated areas.

11. **Mr. Zolfaghari** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country was not only a victim of terrorism but also the target of unilateral, coercive and illegal sanctions. Despite its difficult situation, it hosted 3 million registered refugees and undocumented migrants. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in cooperation with the Afghan Government, had issued identity documents to more than 850,000 migrants since 2016. Over the previous four decades, it had provided education services to some 500,000 refugees and had increased the literacy rate among refugees from 6 per cent to 65 per cent. In addition, 17,000 refugees

were currently enrolled in higher education in the country, 25,000 had graduated from university and 18,815 had completed technical and vocational training courses. Furthermore, 320,000 vulnerable refugees had benefited from free public health insurance provided in cooperation with UNHCR and, more generally, all refugees were covered by the Salamat health insurance scheme on an equal footing with Iranian nationals. The Islamic Republic of Iran had also established a programme of study on Afghanistan aimed, in particular, at Afghan children born in its territory. It provided financial assistance and distributed food to vulnerable refugees in collaboration with UNHCR and other international organizations. In order to combat irregular migration and regulate the presence of Afghan refugees in its territory, the Islamic Republic of Iran had taken various measures, including capacity-building, to enable 550,000 visas per year to be issued to Afghans seeking employment.

12. As a result of the unlawful sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran, the decline in the income of Afghan refugees, growing insecurity caused by the presence of Daesh militants in Afghanistan and the country's financial difficulties, Afghan refugees were increasingly migrating to other countries, particularly the member States of the European Union. The Islamic Republic of Iran hoped that the international community would take steps in line with the objectives of the global compact on refugees. It proposed establishing a mechanism that would enable all decisions adopted to be implemented.

13. **Mr. Grandi** (High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he was very pleased with the measures being taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran, in collaboration with Afghanistan, to regularize the situation of undocumented Afghans, who constituted a particularly vulnerable group. He welcomed the efforts made by Afghanistan to develop a better policy for the reintegration of returning Afghans. He commended the Islamic Republic of Iran, which, despite the difficulties that it faced, continued to implement some of the world's most progressive policies on refugees, particularly in the areas of education, health and employment.

14. He thanked the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his statement and said that the considerations of UNHCR in relation to the situation of Syrian refugees were apolitical. The main concerns of UNHCR were to ensure that Syrians could return to their country and to identify what Syrian refugees perceived to be the obstacles to their return.

15. The High Commissioner for Refugees welcomed the steps that Canada had taken to resettle more people, particularly women and girls, as it was necessary to pay more attention to vulnerable groups. Gender equality was not merely a policy: it should be a tangible reality. He shared the concerns expressed by the representative of Angola in relation to the resources mobilized for the management of refugee affairs in Africa. Work carried out in cooperation with the World Bank and other institutions constituted a different way of addressing that lack of resources.

16. He commended Ecuador, Namibia, the Republic of Moldova, South Africa, Thailand and Turkmenistan for the efforts that they had made and the support that they were giving to the activities of UNHCR.

17. **Mr. Dofing** (Luxembourg) said that Luxembourg aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. His country welcomed the central coordination, implementation and monitoring role played by UNHCR in the context of the global compact on refugees. However, that instrument alone could not eliminate the differences in approach to the resolution of current and future crises. It was therefore important to strengthen the capacities of UNHCR and move towards action and practical coordination. The principle of solidarity must actively underpin UNHCR in the exercise of its broader mandate under the compact. Luxembourg was a reliable partner in the field of humanitarian action, as shown by the multi-year partnership agreement that was due to expire in 2020. In recent years, Luxembourg had increased its cooperation with UNHCR in the field of telecommunications, in particular by providing, within the framework of the emergency.lu project, a free communication platform for activities undertaken in refugee camps in south-east Niger. The country was also considering the possibility of strengthening its participation in the "Connecting Refugees" initiative.

18. **Ms. Farouq** (Nigeria) said that her country aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. Nigeria was currently facing an unprecedented influx of 28,000 Cameroonian asylum seekers, most of whom were women and children. The host communities welcomed those refugees, whose language and customs they shared, and gave them work or access to land. Eight months after the first refugees had arrived, however, local resources were running out and coexistence was becoming difficult. Nigeria was also hosting refugees from other parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia, who were living in urban areas. Measures had been taken to provide refugees with access to training and employment so that they could become self-reliant, while displaced persons, who numbered around 1.9 million, would soon have access to the health services that refugees already enjoyed. Nigeria was preparing to amend the law on the National Commission for Refugees to incorporate the provisions of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), with a view to providing durable solutions for displaced persons and addressing the root causes of the phenomenon. As a major country of origin, transit and destination, Nigeria thanked UNHCR for its assistance in the area of mixed migration. The country constituted a good example of a situation in which the two relevant global compacts on migrants and refugees could be applied together, in order to provide practical solutions to the problems of refugees, asylum seekers or other persons who were displaced now or would be in the future.

19. **Mr. Yu** (China) said that China believed that global issues, such as the issue of refugees, should be addressed within the multilateral system led by the United Nations. The global compact on refugees was a very important initiative in that regard and China supported its consensual adoption by the General Assembly. China believed that a comprehensive solution was needed to address both the root causes and the symptoms of the refugee problem. Countries should assume their obligations, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, by providing greater support to UNHCR and host countries. China believed that objectivity, impartiality and the avoidance of politicization were important pillars for the protection of refugees. The international community and UNHCR should not, under any circumstances, grant refugee status to terrorists and criminals and should prevent protection mechanisms from becoming an instrument for interference in internal affairs. China had always provided assistance to developing countries and those in crisis, and it would continue to help countries deal with problems caused by the influx of refugees. It was ready to strengthen its cooperation with UNHCR and to contribute to improving the global governance of refugee affairs.

20. **Ms. Bibalou Bounda** (Observer for Gabon) said that her country aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the African Group. Gabon reaffirmed its commitment to meeting its obligations towards the approximately 900 refugees and asylum seekers who had been residing in its territory for an average of 25 years. It fully supported the #WithRefugees campaign and petition launched in 2016 by UNHCR and had developed strategies for the implementation of durable solutions for refugees. The authorities had facilitated the voluntary and dignified repatriation of refugees and the issuance of residence permits for those who wished to continue residing in Gabon. Families whose children did not have a birth certificate were assisted in their efforts to obtain one from the civil registry office, and children born to refugees in Gabon had been able to apply for Gabonese nationality. In collaboration with UNHCR, a programme had been set up for the empowerment and socioeconomic integration of refugees, and initiatives focused on vocational training and the provision of microcredits to facilitate their economic integration had been carried out and funded with the support of UNHCR.

21. **Mr. Laourou** (Benin) said that Benin was hosting 1,474 refugees and asylum seekers, who lived in dignified conditions. Since the closure of the UNHCR Office in Benin in April 2017, the Government of Benin had strengthened its partnership with the UNHCR Regional Office for West Africa with regard to the implementation of plans and strategies aimed at protecting refugees and asylum seekers. A new refugee card that complied with UNHCR standards had been issued to all refugees living in Benin, and the Government had adopted a new decree guaranteeing refugees free legal aid to ensure that they enjoyed access to education, the labour market and social welfare on an equal footing with citizens. In addition, Benin had been working to support the voluntary repatriation of Central African refugees since August 2018. Benin wished to thank UNHCR for its technical and

financial support and undertook to continue its efforts to protect persons who had been displaced for environmental and climatic reasons. It was in that spirit, moreover, that it had offered to host the first West Africa Regional Office of the Nansen Initiative.

22. **Mr. Ouattara** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that Côte d'Ivoire aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. However, it was concerned to note that the UNHCR budget for 2019 had decreased despite the increase in the number of persons within its remit, particularly in Africa. Since the 1970s, Côte d'Ivoire had hosted thousands of refugees and other vulnerable persons on its territory without creating camps. It currently had 1,766 refugees of different nationalities. The Government had embarked on the process of adopting an asylum law in order to find a durable solution to the problem of integrating long-term refugees. More than 90 per cent of Ivorian refugees, or approximately 70,000 people, had returned to Côte d'Ivoire. Currently, some 23,326 Ivorian refugees remained in the countries of the subregion. In August 2018, the President of Côte d'Ivoire had signed an amnesty ordinance for events relating to the 2010 post-election crisis in order to facilitate the return of those refugees. In that regard, the Ivorian Government reiterated its request for the clause on cessation of Ivorian refugee status to be applied and requested the support of all for the successful completion of that process in 2020. Côte d'Ivoire had committed itself to the fight against statelessness and, in that regard, had granted Ivorian nationality to more than 16,000 descendants of immigrants. It had also registered 400,000 primary school pupils who had not had birth certificates.

23. **Mr. Gani** (Togo) said that Togo aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. Togo was committed to protecting refugees around the world and was working to find durable solutions for the refugees in its territory. It was currently hosting nearly 13,000 refugees, of 14 different nationalities, most of whom were long-term refugees. In 2017, it had organized a forum on the search for durable solutions, at the end of which it had been established that voluntary repatriation and local integration were the two best solutions. An action plan had been developed to implement the recommendations made at that forum. With regard to repatriation, emphasis had been placed on the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees, and measures had been taken in that regard within the framework of a tripartite agreement involving Côte d'Ivoire and UNHCR. The Government of Togo had also addressed the issue of statelessness, and a commission had been set up in May 2018 to implement mechanisms to combat that problem.

24. **Mr. Nzenza** (Zimbabwe) said that his speech was the first by a representative of Zimbabwe since the country had become a member of the Executive Committee in April 2018. Zimbabwe aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. He expressed the hope that the global compact on refugees would allow for genuine sharing of the responsibilities and financial burden caused by the presence of refugees. The implementation of the comprehensive refugee response framework would also depend on the mobilization of resources. Zimbabwe was hosting just over 13,000 refugees, who were cared for in accordance with the country's international obligations, with particular attention being paid to the most vulnerable. The new Government would assume its responsibilities for refugee protection by developing durable solutions, including measures to integrate refugees and grant them access to the labour market.

25. **Ms. Loose** (New Zealand) said that it was important that the global compact on refugees, which was the result of a compromise, should be able to reduce the burden on host countries. Such countries were on the front line in safeguarding the principle of non-refoulement, which was a cornerstone of human rights and international humanitarian law. From 2020, the quota of refugees hosted by New Zealand would increase from 1,000 to 1,500. The 6 million New Zealand dollar ($NZ) contribution that the country made to UNHCR remained entirely unearmarked.

26. In 2018, New Zealand had allocated $NZ 2 million to UNHCR operations in Bangladesh and another $NZ 2 million to the United Nations Children's Fund to address the sexual and reproductive health needs of Rohingya women and girls and to combat sexual violence.

27. Commending UNHCR for its efforts to ensure transparency in combating sexual exploitation and violence by humanitarian workers and the need for zero tolerance in that regard, she welcomed the emphasis that it placed on integrity in the process of identifying persons in need of protection.

28. **Mr. Condé** (Guinea) said that his country aligned itself with the statement made by Uganda on behalf of the African Group. The return of peace and stability to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone had enabled the vast majority of refugees living in Guinea to return to their countries of origin. Guinea was currently hosting 4,906 refugees, including 4,242 Ivorians. In addition, thanks to the partnership between UNHCR and the Government of Guinea, many initiatives were being taken, as shown by the adoption of a national action plan to eradicate statelessness, the recent adoption of a law on asylum and refugee protection, and the development of a national strategy for local integration.

29. **Mr. González-Aller Jurado** (Spain) said that his country, which had just ratified the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Spanish society was the largest private donor to UNHCR, contributing more than $80 million. Spain was ready to embark on the path opened up by the global compact on refugees, whose multidimensional perspective on mass displacement and the search for durable solutions was fundamental. He wished to stress the importance of fully implementing Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and recalled that Spain would be hosting the Third International Conference on Safe Schools in 2019.

30. Collective action required joint action at the regional level, whether in Central America, where the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework, to which Spain had just contributed €1 million, had been established, or in Europe, where UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration had been fostering joint action for the previous few months.

31. **Mr. Al Ghaindi** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) said that the amount of aid that Saudi Arabia had provided to refugees worldwide over the previous eight years had exceeded $1 billion, of which $239.7 million had been allocated to UNHCR and $93.2 million to the International Organization for Migration. The aid was targeted at refugee host countries, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia and Turkey. Saudi Arabia had also contributed $500 million to the 2018 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan. Since the outbreak of the crisis in Yemen in 2015, Saudi Arabia had provided $11 billion in development and population assistance.

32. Saudi Arabia had also provided $5.55 billion of humanitarian and development assistance to the State of Palestine since 2000, as well as aid to Somalia through UNHCR and International Organization for Migration projects aimed at enabling Somali refugees to return to Yemen. In addition, it was contributing to projects related to internally displaced persons in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan. It was hosting more than one million refugees on its territory. Known as "visitors", those refugees did not live in camps and enjoyed conditions comparable to those of the rest of the Saudi population, including freedom of movement and access to employment, free education and health care. A database containing information and statistics on visitors and the assistance provided by Saudi Arabia was being developed.

33. **Mr. Cornado** (Italy) said that his country aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. More than ever, protection was central to humanitarian action and the momentum generated by the comprehensive refugee response framework must be maintained through the global compact on refugees. The international community must be able to rely on all partners, including those in the private sector. The Italian Government, which had already contributed $40 million for 2018, was renewing its commitment to the humanitarian activities undertaken by UNHCR in major crisis areas.

34. **Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh) said that the global compact on refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration should not be seen as ends in themselves, and that States should make a clear commitment to sharing burdens and responsibilities. Bangladesh was currently hosting more than 1.1 million Rohingya refugees, whom the Government was making efforts to assist with the support of UNHCR, the International

Organization for Migration and other international organizations, as well as friendly governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, only 39 per cent of the necessary funding had been provided. In addition, it should be stressed that Myanmar held the keys to the solution, which centred on three points: first, abolishing the laws, policies and practices that discriminated against the Rohingya and addressing the root causes of displacement in an effective and timely manner; second, establishing a climate of trust by guaranteeing protection, rights and access to nationality for all Rohingya and, if necessary, creating a safe zone in the country to protect all civilians; and lastly, preventing atrocious crimes against the Rohingya by bringing the perpetrators of such acts to justice. Noting the importance of Human Rights Council resolution 34/22 on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, he said that Bangladesh welcomed the memorandum of understanding between Myanmar, UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme.

35. **Mr. Grandi** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he welcomed the efforts made by the States and thanked them for supporting the work of UNHCR. He also welcomed the fact that the major crises that West Africa had undergone a few years previously had led to political solutions, which had made it possible to resolve the issue of displaced persons and refugees. He invited all countries concerned to cooperate with the International Organization for Migration, which was working to promote the voluntary return of economic migrants, because its actions alleviated the sometimes very heavy burden on transit and destination countries, particularly with regard to migrants originating from Libya. He emphasized the complementarity between the global compact on refugees, which marked the beginning of a new approach, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Referring to his visit to China in August 2018, he said that UNHCR wished to continue its dialogue with the Chinese authorities, particularly with regard to the Belt and Road Initiative. Lastly, he thanked Bangladesh for its generous hospitality and Saudi Arabia for its important contribution.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.